

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 0315

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJ: AFGHAN/PAK RELATIONS PRIOR TO BHUTTO--PERSPECTIVE

FROM KABUL

1. SUMMARY: THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE BASIC CHANGE IN PAK/AFGHAN RELATIONS SINCE THE GENERAL COOLING-OFF PERIOD IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER. RECENT DUST-UPP ON DAOUD-BHUTTO MEETING UNFORTUNATE BUT PROBABLY DID LITTLE TO EFFECT OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONS. IF ANY DECISIONS MADE ON LETHAL ARMS SALES KABUL REQUESTS, IF POSSIBLE, ADVANCE NOTICE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR JANUARY 13, DEPUTY FONMIN WAHEED ABDULLAH SAID THAT AMBASSADOR SHOULD "INFORM" SECRETARY KISSINGER THAT THE AFGHAN POSTURE TOWARD PAKISTAN IS EXACTLY THE SAME AS WHAT WAS DESCRIBED TO THE SECRETARY DURING THE NOVEMBER 1 VISIT TO KABUL." THIS REMARK CAME AFTER A DISCUSSION OF MORE RECENT AFGHAN/PAK EVENTS SUCH AS THE BHUTTO INVITATION IMBROGLIO, REPORTS OF REFUGEES FLEEING FROM ALLEGED PAK PERSECUTION IN TRIBAL AREAS, AND HARDLINE INTERVIEW ABDULLAH HAD WITH SUNDAY TIMES (LONDON) REPORTER (TEXT OF INTERVIEW HAS BEEN SENT TO USINFO WASHINGTON). IT'S OUR GENERAL VIEW HERE THAT THERE HAS, IN FACT, BEEN LITTLE
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BASIC CHANGE IN PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN SITUATION. IT SEEMS

TO US THAT AT THIS TIME NEITHER SIDE SEES IT TO ITS ADVANTAGE TO PAY THE POLITICAL PRICE OF MOVING EITHER TOWARD A MARKED IMPROVEMENT OR STIMULATING A SHARP DETERIORATION IN BILATERAL RELATIONS.

2. WITH FURTHER REFERENCE TO THE ABORTED DAOUD/BHUTTO MEETING, WAHEED ABDULLAH TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT WHEN AFGHAN CHARGE' SHERZOI RETURNED TO ISLAMABAD LAST WEEK (APPROXIMATELY JAN 7-9) HE SAW MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AZIZ AHMED. AHMED REMARKED TO SHERZOI THAT AFGHANS SPOKE OFTEN OF "PROPER PREPARATIONS" FOR A DAOUD/BHUTTO MEETING AND ASKED WHAT THE AFGHANS MEANT BY THAT. ACCORDING TO ABDULLAH, SHERZOI TOLD AHMED THAT PROPER PREPARATIONS WOULD CONSIST OF THREE STEPS:

A - THE PAK GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENTER INTO DIRECT TALKS WITH BALUCHI AND PUSHTUN LEADERS;

B - THE "RIGHTS" OF THE BALUCHI AND PUSHTUN PEOPLES SHOULD BE GUARANTEED (NOTE: WHEN AMBASSADOR ASKED FOR AN ELABORATION OF TERM "RIGHTS," ABDULLAH REPLIED "OBVIOUSLY . . . THEIR RIGHTS UNDER THE PAKISTANI CONSTITUTION").

C - THAT PAKISTAN CEASE PROPAGANDA ACCUSING AFGHANISTAN OF TRAINING GUERRILLAS, ETC.

AZIZ AHMED THEN ASKED, ACCORDING TO ABDULLAH, "THESE ARE PRE-CONDITIONS TO TALKS?" SHERZOI REPLIED THAT THEY WERE. WHERE-UPON AHMED STATED THAT CERTAINLY THERE WOULD BE NO TALKS.

COMMENT: WE THINK IT FAIR TO SAY THAT AFGHANS PROBABLY NEVER WOULD HAVE AGREED TO A DAOUD/BHUTTO MEETING EXCEPT UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH ARE PROBABLY UNACCEPTABLE TO PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO PROVIDED AN ESCAPE HATCH WITH A "PREMATURE" STATEMENT TO THE PRESS.

3. OTHER SIDELIGHTS IN RECENT EVENTS WERE REFERENCES IN ABDULLAH'S SUNDAY TIMES INTERVIEW TO "ILLEGALITY AND ARTIFICIALITY OF DURAND LINE (THIS IS SELDOM EXPRESSED SO SUCCINCTLY, AND IN JANUARY 13 CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR ABDULLAH INDICATED HE HAD ONLY TAKEN SUCH A HARD LINE IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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FACT THAT HE WAS ASKED A DIRECT QUESTION ON THE DURAND LINE AND "WHAT COULD I SAY?" ABDULLAH ALSO MENTIONED SOME WERE BALUCHI REFUGEES ...HE SAID ABOUT 200 MORE HAD SOUGHT REFUGE IN AFGHANISTAN. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT KEEPING BORDER AND REFUGEE MATTERS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN ARE A SIGN THAT FOR THE TIME BEING THE AFGHANS ARE STANDING ON THE STATUS QUO WITH REGARD TO SENSITIVE BILATERAL PAK/AFGHAN ISSUES.

4. LETHAL ARMS SALES TO PAKISTAN. EMBASSY HAS REVIEWED
KABUL 6203 OF 30 SEPT 1974 AND BELIEVES CONCLUSIONS REGARDING
AFGHAN REACTION TO U.S. DECISION TO RENEW SALES OF LETHAL
WEAPONS TO PAKISTAN REMAIN VALID. WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO
STRESS AT THIS POINT IS THE NEED TO GIVE AFGHANS ADVANCE AND
HIGH-LEVEL NOTICE OF ANY SUCH U.S.-PAK AGREEMENT BEFORE IT
ENTERS PUBLIC DOMAIN.
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